Clinton Picks Four of Five For JFK File Review Board

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Reuter

President Clinton has named four members of a five-person commission set up by Congress to review government documents related to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy still being withheld by government agencies.

A 1992 law called for the release of virtually all documents in government hands relating to the president's death but set up the Assassinations Review Board to determine which could be withheld from disclosure.

By law, the panel is to review requests for exemption from the disclosure requirements as well as to compel reluctant agencies to make documents available. Exemptions are provided mainly to protect intelligence sources and methods.

The law said the panel should have five presidentially appointed members. The White House did not say why a fifth individual was not named Friday.

Appointed to the panel were Princeton University librarian William L. Joyce, University of Tulsa Dean Kermit L. Hall, American University history Prof. Anna Kasten Nelson and Minnesota Chief Deputy Attorney General John R. Tunheim.

The law called for the panel to be named by Jan. 25, five days after Clinton took office. The delay in the appointments had been criticized by researchers fearful that the panel's two-year term—with a possible one-year extension—might expire before its work was done.

An estimated 1 million pages of assassination-related material were made public by the National Archives Aug. 23, but hundreds of thousands of other pages were withheld.

The CIA, for instance, said it was planning to withhold at least 10,000 pages to protect intelligence sources and methods. In addition, it said it needed to discuss with the panel how to handle more than 100,000 pages that exist only on microfilm.